

THE REHEARSAL.

1. The Danger of *Baptism* with the *Dissenters*.
2. The heavy *Charge* upon the *Rehearsal*.
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7. The Dreadful *Judgment* of *Separating* from the *Church*.

WEDNESDAY, October 22. 1707.

(1.) *Country-man*. **Y**OU have said enough, *Master*, to Rouze the *Conscience* of any *Dissenter* that is not harden'd to a *Stone*. I'm sure, if I was a *Dissenter*, it wou'd Prick me to the Heart. And till I cou'd give an *Answer* to what you have said in these three last Papers, I wou'd never go to a *Meeting*, lest I Perish'd in their *Sin*: I wou'd not Receive their *Sacraments*, lest I offer'd their *Provocations*: And I shou'd think my self Guilty of the *Blood* of my *Child*, if I brought it to their *Baptism*: At least my own *Blood* wou'd lie upon my Head, if I did it with a *Doubting* mind, while I cou'd have that *Baptism* which was *Indisputed* to make my *Child* a *Member* of the *Church*. And how can he who has Thrust himself out of the *Church*, admit another to be a *Member* of it? Can I make another *Free* of any *Corporation*, who am not *Free* my self? No. If I am *Baptiz'd* by a *Schismatick*, I am *Baptiz'd* into his *Schism*, and made a *Member* of it, and not of the *Church* against which he is in *Rebellion* and open *Defiance* to it. The *Children* of *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* were *Swallowed* up with them. If we will Hazard our selves, let us have some *Compassion* for our *Innocent Children*, for our own *Bowels*!

(2.) *Rehearsal*. The *Charge* upon them is *Heavy*, but it is *True*. I know it has Rais'd the *Indignation* of several of them, I hear it from all hands. What! say they, wou'd he *Un-Church* Us, and *Annull* our *Sacraments*? wou'd he make the *Ordinary Ministrations* of our *Ministers* as little *Valid*, and more *Guilty* than if Perform'd by a *Porter* or a *Midwife* in *Case* of *Necessity*? Where is the *Moderation* of this Man? Where is his *Charity*? He makes all our *Meetings* to be *Assemblies* of *Korah*, in *Rebellion* against *God*! We are not able to bear it— We will not bear it— It is not fit such a Man shou'd *Live*

upon the *Earth*. All this I have heard. And now I desire them to hear my *Defence*. I hope they are not all *Provok'd* past the *Bounds* of *Reason*.

(3.) First then I desire them to tell me, What they think it is a man's *Duty* to do, if he is verily *Perswaded* that this is their *Cafe*? Shall he be *Silent*, and let them go on in their *Sin*? And let them *Perish* Eternally for him, rather than he wou'd be at the *Pains* to *Convince* them, if he Cou'd; or rather than *Displease* them, or loose their *Favour*, or run the *Hazard* of what they might do to him in the *Bitterness* of their *Spirit*?

Or, in the next Place, if such a *Silence* wou'd be *Highly Guilty*, and *Argue Self-Love* rather than the *Love* of our *Neighbour*; shall he then, since he must *Speak*, or else *Offend* his own *Conscience*, shall he *Mince* the *Matter*, and *Alleviate* or *Excuse*, and *Smooth* over their *Sin* till it appear *Tolerable*? This wou'd be Really to *sew Pillows*, to *Hate* our *Neighbour*, and *Suffer Sin* upon him, and to *bear Sin* for him, as our *Margin* Reads *Lev. xix. 17*. For that *Sin* lies upon me, which I suffer to go *Unreprov'd* in another.

(4.) And I am to lay out his *Sin* before him in its proper *Colours*, to let it Appear as *Black* and *Heinous* as it is, that he *Flatter* not himself in his own sight, until his *Abominable Sin* be found out. Till it find him out, and *Judgment* overtake him, when ther shall be no *Remedy*. But if he *Repent*, then, as *Solomon* says, he that *Reprovet* will find more *Favour* than he that *Flattereth* with his lips. Therefor I hope still to find their *Favour* in an *Honest* way, in a *True* and *Consciencious* *Discharge* of my *Duty*, tho' at Present I purchase their *Displeasure*. But if it shou'd happen otherwise, yet I have *Deliver'd* mine own *Soul*.

(5.) For I do here Protest before God, in the most serious Manner, That I believe their Case to be Really as I have put it. And the Arguments which I have offer'd to them have fully Convinc'd my self, that *Episcopacy* was the *Primitive* and *Apostolical* Institution of the Government of the Church. And consequently, that those *Presbyters* or *Others* who Break off from it, are Guilty of the very Sin of *Korah*, and of those *Christians* of whom St. Jude speaks, who separate themselves, and Perish in the Gainsaying of *Korah*. I know nothing wherein his Gainsaying did Consist, but in his Gainsaying to the Priesthood of *Aaron*. He differ'd not with *Aaron* in any other point either of *Doctrine* or *Worship*. And since St. Jude brings down this Case of *Korah* to the *Christian Church*, and Applies it to those who Separated themselves, and broke off from their Lawful Governors in the Church, I see not why it is not as Applicable at this Day. And that *Usurping* upon the *Christian Priesthood*, and Separating our selves in Opposition to it, is as Great a Sin as it was in the *Levitical Dispensation*, if not Greater, as much Greater as the Priesthood which God Ordain'd by Christ, is of more Dignity and Regard with Him, than what He appointed by his Servant *Moses*. For *Moses* was but a Type of Christ, and the Priesthood and Sacrifices appointed by him were Types of the *Newer* and more Expressive *CHRISTIAN* Sacrifice and Priesthood. Shall then the *Usurpers* of the *Levitical Priesthood* be Swallowed up Quick into the Pit, and is ther no Judgment of God due to the *Usurpers* upon the *Christian Priesthood*? Was it Death for any but the Priests to Offer the Legal Sacrifices, and may the *Evangelical Sacrifice* be Offer'd, without Offence, by any Hands not lawfully Ordain'd?

And must they not be Told of this? Must I be their Enemy because I tell them the Truth? Is it because I love them not? God knoweth I declare, so far as I know my own Mind, I wou'd give my Life to purchase their Reconciliation, and that I might see the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.

If they will not Believe me, I cannot help it. But I will not fail to tell them the True and the Right way. I have Reduc'd the Dispute betwixt us to one single Point, of which every one may Judge, a Point of Fact which cannot be Counterfeited. That is when *Episcopacy* did Begin. And this Determines the whole matter, without Multitude of Quotations, or Referring you to many Books.

(6.) *Country-m.* After what you have said, he must want all Charity who do's not Believe your Professions are True, and from your Heart. And the more because it is nothing to you, as to Worldly Interest, whether the Dissenters Prevail or not. For your Sack of

Malt they may set the *Kiln* on fire, and do you little Harm. Nay it is against your Interest to Provoke so Great a Body of Men, and who have so Great Power and Influence who are Capable to do you Good or Harm. Therefore it can be Nothing which moves you to Concern your self thus with them, and to lay their Sin before them, but the Danger you apprehend ther is to their Souls. And it will Confirm your Charge against them, if instead of Answering your Short and Plain Argument they Return railing Accusations against you, and Hatred for your Good Will. You Provoke them to Answer, not by way of Insulting, but to shew them the little Ground they have for their Separation, when they Cannot Justifie it, or Answer one plain Question that is Ask'd them, When did *Episcopacy* begin?

(7.) *Rehears.* It is to Hop'd, that some will Consider this; and if they see not their way through, but that they are Hedg'd in on Every side, and can find Nothing to Reply, they will think of Returning, that they Sin not Wilfully, nor Offend of Malicious Wickedness, of whom *David* says, Forgive them not. And the severest saying in the whole Book of God is of those who Forsake the Assembling of our selves together, as the Manner of some is. Heb. x. 25. For of those it is said, That, If we sin wilfully, after we have receiv'd the Knowledge of the Truth, there Remaineth no more Sacrifice for sins, but a Certain Fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall Devour the Adversaries.

Country-m. O Dreadful! and will Men make themselves these Adversaries, by Forsaking the Publick Assemblies, and Separating themselves, and run the Hazard of this Terrible Sentence; and upon a Cause which they cannot Defend, nor Answer a word to that Plain but Forceable Question you have Ask'd, and without Answering of which they must stand Condemn'd to all the World, and to their own Conscience! Pray God give them Repentance before it be too Late.

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